



The façade of Varun Nagpal's home in Goa

Art of Living

Varun Nagpal, Founder of Vianaar Homes, on art residencies, Goan heritage, and the philosophy behind India's most mindfully designed luxury second homes.

By KRITI SHUKLA

In a real estate market that moves fast and builds faster, Vianaar Homes operates at a different tempo. Founded in Goa in 2009, the studio is led by brother-sister duo Varun Nagpal, who is the founder, and Naina Nagpal, who is the creative director who have spent 15 years building luxury second homes that are defined not by scale but by intention—spaces where natural materials, considered design, and a deep respect for the surrounding come together to create something closer to a way of life than a property investment.

From the beginning, Vianaar's homes have been defined by a studied use of local architecture and craft. "Our intent

was that we will design homes that we would like to live in," says Varun Nagpal in a conversation with Bazaar India. "Whatever we did—the architecture, the interiors, the detailing, the finishes, the furniture—we did it like we would do it for our own home," he adds.

That instinct quickly became a formal design position. All new projects draw from Indo-Portuguese architecture—the dominant vernacular of old Goa—finished with materials pulled directly from its traditions: hand-laid terrazzo floors, lime plaster walls, coloured cement finishes in bathrooms, and the local laterite stone Patra Devi across façades and driveways. "We studied the

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Varun Nagpal

old Goan houses—what finishes did these homes have—and took inspiration from that," Nagpal explains. "We use them in all our projects."

The commitment runs deeper than aesthetics. The artisans' community who can execute lime plaster and cement finishes is a shrinking one. "In some way, we are also supporting this community of craftspeople who are among the few people left in the industry who can perform these functions. When somebody enters a home, we want them to feel like they've entered an old Goan house," Nagpal explains. The material also fits Vianaar's sustainability position—terrazzo is made from marble industry waste, entirely handmade, and centuries old in technique. "It supports artisans, but it's also a sustainable material," Nagpal says. "It does both."

ART AS ARCHITECTURE

Vianaar's interiors are furnished, not just designed, and art is integral to that. What began as Varun personally collecting pieces while travelling evolved, over time, into a structured artist residency programme. "I got into collecting art around 2012," he recalls. "We were also buying art for the homes. And along the journey, those two things came together."

Artists are invited to stay on-site for 30–45 days. At the end of each residency, Vianaar produces a short documentary on the artist's work and experience; the pieces created during the stay are placed in the homes. "We do a small film on them, people get to know about their work and their

experience, and eventually we use their art in our homes," Nagpal explains. "It all started because of my interest in art—and the fact that we were furnishing homes."

Four residencies have been completed, and four more are scheduled. The programme is also expanding beyond painting. "We thought, why not extend the philosophy to other art forms as well. For instance, a photographer is coming from Ibiza to capture the local life of Goa—certain things which are forgotten or get masked because of so much development happening around," says Nagpal.

NATURE AS A DESIGN ELEMENT

Vianaar's homes are built to dissolve the boundary between inside and outside. "It is so relaxing and peaceful when you are surrounded by the sounds of nature," Nagpal insists. The homes are designed around that premise—generous openings, covered verandas, terraces, cross-ventilation—so that nature is experienced from within, not just viewed from a window.

That extends to material choices too. Furniture is sourced with the same intentionality as finishes. "Certain furniture comes from Nagaland, made in a village which supports local artisans," says Nagpal. "Wherever you can add value by supporting somebody, we try and do that."

EXPANDING BEYOND GOA

Vianaar is now carrying this model into new markets. Its first international project, Pol Vatta Estate, has been launched in Ahangama, a town on Sri Lanka's southern coast. Closer home, a project in Kasauli debuted last year, targeting the growing demand for second homes in hill stations. "We are very mindful. The choice of supporting old techniques, artisans—it is an ideology which connects a lot of things," Nagpal concludes. ■

